

## **SAFEGUARD POLICIES**

### **Process Framework**

#### **CEPF Large-Grant Project**

Project Title: Integrated Watershed Management Planning and Forest Reserve Protection in the Central Mountain Range Conservation Corridor of St. Vincent. (Application Code: 60934)

Implemented by: National Parks, Rivers and Beaches Authority (NPRBA)

Project Supervisor: Mr. Hayden Billingsy, Superintendant of Rivers Beaches and Recreation Sites, NPRBA

#### Project Details

This project will lead to the development of an Integrated Watershed Management Plan (IWMP) for Cumberland Forest Reserve in order to improve protection of the IUCN Global Red Listed species within the Central Mountain Range Conservation Corridor. It is expected that this project through the IWMP will improve land use planning and inter-agency coordination especially in the three multiple -use watershed areas of the Central Mountain Range Conservation Corridor; strengthen protection of key biodiversity assets; and support the long-term conservation of important KBAs and improve land and water use planning within the Central Mountain Range Conservation Corridor.

#### **I. Assessment of the potential impact on the livelihoods of communities and resource users.**

The project has identified socioeconomic activities within the Reserve that ranged from farming, potable water harvesting, hydroelectricity, recreational parks, fishing, and tourism interest, among others. These activities are important to the livelihoods and subsistence of the population within and surrounding the Cumberland Forest Reserve/KBA. The project will not prohibit livelihoods and subsistence uses of the area; although it is expected to introduce regulations to ensure that resource use and extraction are done in a sustainable manner. Therefore, while the project may lead to changes in patterns of use of the area, for example introduction of hunting and fishing regulation, it will not remove stakeholders' right of access to the Cumberland Forest Reserve/KBA. Moreover, the project will introduce a number of measures that are intended to enhance the potential of livelihood and social activities in the area. These include:

- Zoning of different land use including forest, farming, commercial, etc that will help to preserve the land status over time. This process will involve community consultations and technical discussions on current and potential use of land holdings and also taking into consideration the overall management objective of the Reserve/KBA.
- Protection of forest and farm lands from erosion and landslides through soil and water conservation methods. This will help to sustain the resources to meet the current and future livelihood activities and to ensure food security.
- Increase water retention and storage through maintenance of adequate ground cover. This would result in increase infiltration and percolation of water, increase base flow during critical periods and reduce runoff and sedimentation of the water supplies. This will ensure adequate water supply throughout the dry periods of the year that can be beneficial to community uses for fishing, recreation and other domestic purposes.
- Sustain the above minimum river discharge that is required for hydroelectricity generation throughout the year.
- Preservation of the natural ecosystem, including wildlife to sustain tourism activities such as bird watching, waterfalls and river tours, mountain hikes and forest trails, etc. that also contribute to livelihood opportunities.
- Improved land cover and land management practices would reduced sedimentation and smothering of coral reefs and marine ecosystems that will impact positively on the fisheries.

## **II. Consultation with local communities and resources users before any changes are made to protected area regulations.**

Consultation with local communities and resource users has been a hallmark of the process to develop this project and the relationships forged and modalities used will continue to be a feature of project implementation. The project design was developed with a good understanding of the socioeconomic and environmental factors within the Cumberland Forest Reserve, the challenges, various barriers and factors impacting the reserve and the benefits to the surrounding communities. This understanding comes from years of planning and intervention by agencies staff of the Forestry Department and National Parks Authority within the reserve and working with community groups within the study area. Two major levels of consultations were held with the Forestry Department, that has management responsibility for the reserve, and Community Based Organizations (Barrouallie Tourism and Heritage Organization and Cumberland Valley Eco-Tourism Organization) who co-manage recreational parks on behalf of NPRBA, located within the reserve. These included brainstorming over the issues and the recommendations of the brainstorming sessions were included in the design of the project.

Consultations with the communities affected and stakeholders will be an iterative process and will continue through the entire project cycle. Proposed activities would include:

- Facilitating continuous stakeholder consultations/presentations at various stages of project implementation, particularly with local communities, students and teachers regarding potential benefits for the community. This feedback will be incorporated into the ultimate project outcomes prior to major changes made to any or documents. The project design does not make allowance for changes in protected areas regulations. However should there be recommendation from in IWMP for changes in such regulations, there will be further consultations to gain feedback from stakeholders.
- Continuous monitoring of social, political and economic factors relating to project implementation and assessing whether the designed interventions are effective in addressing issues of biodiversity conservation, watershed management and livelihood activities.
- Particular attention will be given to gender dimensions in all project components. These will cover measures to improve access to information and resources by all gender and ensuring that all project outcome is mutually beneficial to everyone. These outcomes will also reflect gender perspectives.
- Screening of possible social safeguard issues. Review of all possible areas within the project lifespan to ensure that the project meets its objectives without causing adverse negative impacts on the environment or livelihoods of the surrounding communities.

**III. Results of the assessment are shared with affected local communities and resource users.**

At least two stakeholder consultations will be held over the life of the project to present the result of the Ecosystem Valuation study, Wildlife Conservation Plan, Biological Inventory Report, Survey map and detailed zoning plan of the Cumberland Forest Reserve, and the final IWMP, to local communities, protected areas agencies, ecosystem service providers and schools within the study area. This feedback will be incorporated into the ultimate project outcomes.

**IV. Identification of impacts that will reduce the ability of local communities and/or individual families to meet their basic needs for food, shelter, medicine, or impacts that will leave communities and/or individual families worse off as a result of the project than they were before the project started.**

The project design and approach so far are not expected to have any adverse impacts on the environment, the socioeconomic status of local other persons associated with, or found within the confines of the project study area. However, the Reserve is currently used by locals for hunting of wildlife including iguanas, opossum, agouti and armadillo during restricted hunting seasons. These activities are, however, conducted in an ad-hoc and unsustainable manner. The

implementation of this project will not make alterations to the hunting season but will ensure the utilization of the resources, including Non Timber Forest Products (NTFPs) s in a more structured way that will ensure sustainability of the recourse. This will not inhibit local communities and/or individual families to meet their basic needs for food, shelter, etc., but will reduce pressure on the limited resource and foster generational equity as a result.

**Involuntary Resettlement (OP/BP 4.12):** This project will be implemented in a Reserve/KBA that includes Government-owned lands, and these account for the larger part of the area. However, there are pockets of privately owned lands within the area that are used for farming activities, but there are currently no residential settlements within Cumberland Forest Reserve/KBA. While a zoning plan is proposed for the watershed, the land owners will not be displaced as there is no need for land acquisition or resettlement in the implementation of the project. The populace that resides in areas surrounding the Reserve/KBA will continue to have legal access to resources and will in no way be disenfranchised due to implementation of the project. However, screening would continue during project intervention and implementation. There will be opportunity for communities to consult with the NPRBA on these matters which will likely involve civil society and community groups discussing key issues. NPRBA will facilitate these discussions and meetings. In the eventuality that such restrictions of access to resources are identified, an Involuntary Restriction Framework will be developed to include actions to mitigate possible impacts and ensure access and appropriate benefits to these people.

**V. A plan to mitigate serious impacts on community livelihoods as part of the project plan, with a dedicated budget for mitigation activities.**

The project planning process has not indentified any potential negative impact on community livelihoods. However, screening of possible safeguard issues will continue in all project components during implementation. This will be done by the Watershed Consultant as well as the National Park, Rivers and Beaches Authority through the Project Supervisor /community liaison. In the eventuality that project activities have a serious, negative effect on livelihoods, the necessary plan and framework would be developed to include actions to mitigate possible impacts and ensure appropriate benefits to these people.

**VI. A grievance redress mechanism (including widely publicized contact details that people can contact if they are unhappy with the project or project team).**

There is no ideal model or one-size-fits-all approach to grievance resolution. The best solutions to conflicts are generally achieved through localized mechanisms that take account of the specific issues, cultural context, local customs, and project conditions and scale.

In the event that grievances expressed by persons who may be displeased with the project or project team, they will be encouraged to use the grievance process outlined below.

In the first instance where a grievance might be expressed, efforts will be made to resolve the matter in face-to-face meetings. Depending on the situation or context, this may be through community meetings or meeting with the project supervisor from National Parks, Rivers and Beaches Authority (who acts as community liaison officer). Additionally, suggestion boxes will be made available for complaints where it is felt that anonymity should be maintained. These boxes will be located at National Parks Headquarters, JCl Building, Stoney Grounds. We expect that the majority of complaints would be handled through these channels.

For complaints and grievances that cannot be handled through these channels, complaints would be encouraged to use the following process:

1. Submit complaint/grievance in writing via post, email, fax or courier to the Director, National Parks, Rivers and Beaches Authority, Jaycees Building, Stoney Grounds, P.O Box 195, St. Vincent, West Indies Tel: 1-784-453-1623 Fax: 1-784-453-1622 Email: nationalparkssvg@gmail.com
2. All complaints will be formally registered by the National Parks, Rivers and Beaches Authority
3. Complaints will be screened and assessed by the Project Steering Committee, which will convene a sessions for arbitration.
4. The PSC will formulate a response to the complainant proposing a resolution approach or options for a resolution approach. Four Grievance Resolution Approaches have been identified:
  - The PSC proposes a solution.
  - The community and PSC decide together.
  - The PSC and community defer to a third party to decide. Grievances would be presented to a committee of three independent persons. An agreement will be reached that is agreeable to all parties.
  - The PSC and community utilize traditional or customary practices.
5. A resolution approach will be selected and implemented with the agreement of all parties.
6. Once the issue is settled satisfactorily, the NPRBA will track and evaluate the results.
7. Lessons learnt from the experience will be analysed and communicated back to all parties involved.

8. Copies of all grievances will be sent to CANARI and CEPF - Secretariat in Arlington, Virginia.

In the event that the complainant is not satisfied after going through the process outlined above, s/he will have the right to appeal to the National Project Coordinator through the Project Steering Committee.

Information about the grievance process and formal mechanisms outlines above will be made available to stakeholders in the following ways:

- [www.discoversvg.com](http://www.discoversvg.com)
- Public Service Announcement through radio and television
- Agency for Public Information
- Tourism Newsletter